

Attended public meeting in Portland, Maine. Unable to stay and make public comment. In the 3 hours in attendance all I heard was broadcasters saying there is no problem and they are totally about "local" content. PSA's for charity was primarily what they consider "local". According to broadcasters, PSA's are the cure for cancer! See my official comments attached.

June 28, 2007

Good Evening Commissioners,

My name is Georgia Humphrey

I am a resident of Gray, Maine

I have been the Station Manager for Gorham Community Access TV in Gorham, Maine, for 9 years. We are a PEG station operating in association with Time Warner Cable of Maine.

I want to thank the members of the FCC for having their boots on the ground in Portland. I think you will receive an important perspective from this public hearing that reflects the attitudes of small cities and rural areas that are often unheard.

I am not going to share another poignant story about how access television empowers the children, the poor, the elderly, or the disenfranchised by allowing them to voice their interests, their joys, their concerns or grievances. I will point out that community TV provides services to citizens that are the very core of what America is suppose to be about. We are part of the "new town square" that has developed in partnership with new technologies.

I have 3 points I would like to share with you.

1. Preserving Infrastructure – Through regulation that has worked, utilizing franchise fee agreements with Cable Companies around the country that have honored the Public Right of Way, an incredible infrastructure has been developed.. This system has been finance with NO government money. This infrastructure includes cable and fiber connections and hardware on site in many cities and towns. Also in place at these locations is what I call the "soft

structure” in other words the human resources that are monitoring and maintaining this equipment. If you allow sweeping changes to occur in regulation, many of these resources will disappear. I think history will reflect this as a grave error much akin to the demise of America’s rail infrastructure.

2. My second point is in regards to Security issues. This is an intense area of discussion and concern. We are throwing so much government money at it. You don’t need to be reminded that emergency response for Hurricane Katrina was dismal and much was due to communication problems. There is a huge potential for local community television stations to partner with Police and Fire Departments and other Government Organizations. Some of the uses could include the use of satellite feeds for training, re-broadcasting, message and update newscasting of national government agencies. The ability to get local emergency information dispersed or for local authorities to make public announcements during a crisis. Many stations are able to stream their broadcasts via the World Wide Web. Small stations like mine are trying to meet that technological challenge but it is our goal to reach as many citizens as possible. Instead of cutting our funding resources doesn’t it just make common sense for the government to support and expand these local media hubs? The thought of these resources falling into disrepair and disintegrating makes me ill. It is senseless.

3. Social consequences of shutting off public input. Government isn’t always keen on hearing the comments of the public. Criticism is never comfortably received. I hope that you are capable of wading through the rhetoric and receive input from the people in the trenches who are doing this community work every single day. Free speech is a founding pillar of the American Experience. People want to feel like they are being heard. They want their grievances to be addressed. Free speech is a social control method for the government because it allows people the opportunity to vent hostility. Anger can find many ways to express itself and free speech seems to be one of the best methods we have to passively deal with it. Squelching that option in all its various forms will lead to a population more and more discontent and hasten that innate reflex to revolt and rail against the system. Ask yourself this question, Would you rather have people wielding

cameras or guns?

In closing I want to say that I feel the FCC has been charged with difficult tasks. I also know that you are empowered with the ability to regulate. To the lay person creating regulations is the same as making laws except it circumvents a citizen's usual recourse through representation. It is a slippery slope and I pray that you can put aside partisan differences and regulate for all in a fair and balanced manner. Small grassroots organizations are going to be hard pressed to take on strong corporate lobbying efforts. I wonder if you have a statistical conversion formula that evaluates the effort of the common people to rally a concerned movement against the highly paid consultant or lobbyist? America can not continue with a profit at any cost attitude. Greed has to be checked. You are charged with finding a way to preserve and support the hard work of regular folks working in local media.

I thank you for your time.

Georgia Humphrey